

Many Christian parents desire to evangelize their own children.

Me?

Train Parents to Evangelize Their Children?

Yes! Here's all the help you need!

Barth and Sally Middleton

We were surprised when Heather* responded to an invitation to receive Christ during our VBS. She had attended church since birth. Her parents lead a mid-week children's ministry and her grandparents are retired missionaries.

We asked Heather, "Have you ever received Jesus as your Savior?" She said no so we guided her in her decision. Later that same day we told the parents what happened. Pleased and excited they said, "We thought she was about ready. She's been asking all kinds of questions."

Another scenario. Trent, age six, came to us after Good News Club[®] saying he needed a Savior. After asking questions to check his understanding of the Gospel, we prayed with him. When we told his parents they thought this decision was "nice" but were not sure Trent was old enough to trust Christ. However, Trent is now twelve and has never doubted his salvation.

Teachers who consistently present the Gospel are likely to have the privilege of leading their students to Christ. Many Christian parents desire to evangelize their own children but may have thoughts like these:

- ❖ I don't know how to do it.
- ❖ I don't want to do it incorrectly.
- ❖ I don't want to do it too soon.

As a teacher, why not offer to train parents to evangelize their children?

One-On-One Training

Begin training by asking the parent to recall his own salvation experience and a verse that gives him assurance. Then hand him a children's tract and role play: you act as the parent; the parent acts as the child.

Go through the Gospel explanation. Use thought-provoking questions to draw out what the “child” understands. Help him to pray and give him assurance from God’s Word. Then switch roles so the parent walks through the process while you act as a *cooperative* child.

Pray with the parent, asking God to prepare his child’s heart and to give the parent courage to speak about salvation. Parents are probably more ready than they think. That was true for five-year-old Hanna’s parents.

Hanna’s grandma had died. Riding home from the funeral, Hanna asked her parents how she could know she would be in Heaven someday. These parents had never led anyone to Christ but they explained the salvation message and listened as their daughter prayed. The following Sunday they asked us to talk to Hanna. We found she had assurance of her salvation and all rejoiced! With a little training these parents would have felt more confident.

Group Training

If you have several parents who express an interest in learning how to lead their children to Christ, hold a simple group training session. Build your presentation on five questions.

1. When should I talk with my child about salvation?

- ❖ The obvious answer is when he asks about it. But, like a teacher, a parent can create an opportunity to evangelize.
- ❖ Ask about her Sunday school lesson and see if salvation can be discussed in connection with the truth taught.
- ❖ Watch “The Story of Jesus for Children” video together and talk about the need to respond to the message.
- ❖ Go through the first eight days of *The Wonder Devotional Book*** together, allowing the child time to record his thoughts. Day eight includes a sample salvation prayer.
- ❖ Use Christmas and Easter as natural times to speak about who Jesus is, why He came and what it means to become a Christian.

2. How should I explain the message of salvation?

Emphasize that the explanation can be simple but should include appropriate Scripture verses. A children’ tract offers excellent assistance. CEF’s “First Steps”** tract pictures children asking the following questions and includes Scripture in the answers:

- ❖ Am I a sinner? (Rom. 3:23)

- ❖ “Do I need to be saved from my sin?” (Rom. 6:23)
- ❖ “How did God make a way to save me from my sin?” (1 Cor. 15:3-4)
- ❖ “Can I be saved any other way than through Jesus?” (John 14:6)
- ❖ What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:31)

The *Wordless Book*** is another great way to walk through the salvation message, using a verse for each page.

3. How do I know my child understands?

Note that three of the five questions cited from the “First Steps” tract can be answered yes or no. An adult’s facial expressions and gestures often lead a child to give a correct response regardless of what he understands. Therefore, recommend asking the child questions that require thought.

Not: Have you ever sinned?

Better: What have you done that God would call sin?

Not: Do you believe Jesus died and rose again to pay for your sin?

Better: What did Jesus do so your sin could be forgiven?

The parent can rely on the Holy Spirit and the power of God’s Word to convict the child of his sinfulness and show him his need of a Savior. Childlike faith, not an extensive education, is what it takes for salvation. Aren’t we glad?

4. If my child wants to receive Christ how do I help him pray?

Perhaps you were trained to guide a child by using the A-B-C method:

Admit you are a sinner.

Believe Jesus died to pay for your sin and rose again.

Call on the Lord to save you.

After reviewing these A-B-C’s the child should be able to pray in his own words. Parents realize that children are great imitators, so giving them words to say is not the best plan. By asking the child to pray out loud the parent can prompt him with a question if needed like, “What do you believe Jesus did for you?” or “What do you want Jesus to do for you right now?”

Throughout your training time express excitement about leading a child to Christ and confidence that the parent is capable of succeeding (with God’s help).

5. How do I help my child with assurance?

Scripture is the strongest tool. If the parent uses Acts 16:31 to explain salvation, he should show the child that verse in the Bible and put his name in the place of “you.”

Suggest he encourage the child to tell someone about the decision he has made. That could be a grandparent, a sibling or you. Wouldn't you love to have a child come to class and tell you he received Christ during the week?

Ask the parent to trust God that the decision is real. We can cause children to doubt their salvation, especially when they misbehave, by saying things like, “If you were really a Christian, you wouldn't act like that.” It is better to treat the child like a believer, lead him to confess sin and teach him to trust God to help him obey.

Parents may want to mark their calendar and plan to recognize the child's spiritual birthday. This could be done quietly, with a gift of a Christian book or a nice note, especially if there are unsaved siblings.

When answering the fifth question for a prospective parent-evangelist, check to see if the person is sure of his own salvation. If the parent has doubts he will struggle helping his child gain assurance.

With the basic guidance provided here you are ready to assist moms and dads in learning to evangelize their children. Start with the parents you know well, by sending them an e-mail offer or give this article to a leader in your church.

A reward is waiting for someone who will accept this training opportunity.

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**Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

***Available from CEF Press. Check your Christian bookstore or call 1-800-748-7710.*

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